

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

*Chief John R. Batiste*

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## **Tissue Donor Program featured on the WSP Web site**

OLYMPIA -- The Washington State Patrol Web site has added a new section on its public Web site that features their Tissue Donor Program. The new pages provide facts, statistics, donor stories and other useful information about the Problem Oriented Public Safety (POPS) program and how it works.

The new Tissue Donor site is located at: [www.wsp.wa.gov/comunity/tissue/tissue.htm](http://www.wsp.wa.gov/comunity/tissue/tissue.htm)

Detective Steve Stockwell, a 24-year State Patrol veteran who works in Bremerton, started the WSP Tissue Donor Program in 2002, after he saw the need for it firsthand. Though there were no established channels of communication with referral services to reach the Tissue Center or the Lions Eye Bank, Det. Stockwell persisted in finding a way to help a bereaved father act on his wish to donate after losing his son in a traffic collision.

Detective Stockwell created the program in conjunction with the donation agencies and WSP staff. The program is very simple, giving troopers and communications officers the ability to notify donation agencies of traffic deaths through a referral service. With the permission of coroners and medical examiners, the Northwest Tissue Center and the Northwest Lions Eye Bank then offer the option of tissue and/or cornea donation to families.

"I'm proud of the way the Patrol has responded," says Det. Stockwell. "None of this would have been possible without support from so many people."

The WSP program is particularly important because it fills a gap for people whose family members die outside of hospitals. Though federal law requires hospitals to report deaths to donation agencies, no similar regulation exists for traffic fatalities, who are never treated in a health-care institution.

To date, the WSP Tissue Donation Program referrals have enabled 14 people to become tissue donors, aiding many patients and offering comfort to families. The program has also resulted in 29 cornea donations, giving more than 50 people the gift of sight.

"The WSP program has been such a great asset to us and to the community," says Candy Wells, the Tissue Center's hospital services supervisor. "We are so grateful to the State Patrol for embracing this program and helping us in our mission. It's such a great service to patients in need of transplants and to surviving families and friends who would like to choose donation."

Last November marked the first anniversary of his program, which has received national and international recognition. Several other states, including Idaho and Montana, are using the WSP Tissue Donation Program as a model. The Montana program started February 1.

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